

Urban Farm Code Update

Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board
Code & Metrics Working Group



July 22, 2013
Update to Sustainable Food Policy Board



Codes & Metrics Working Group

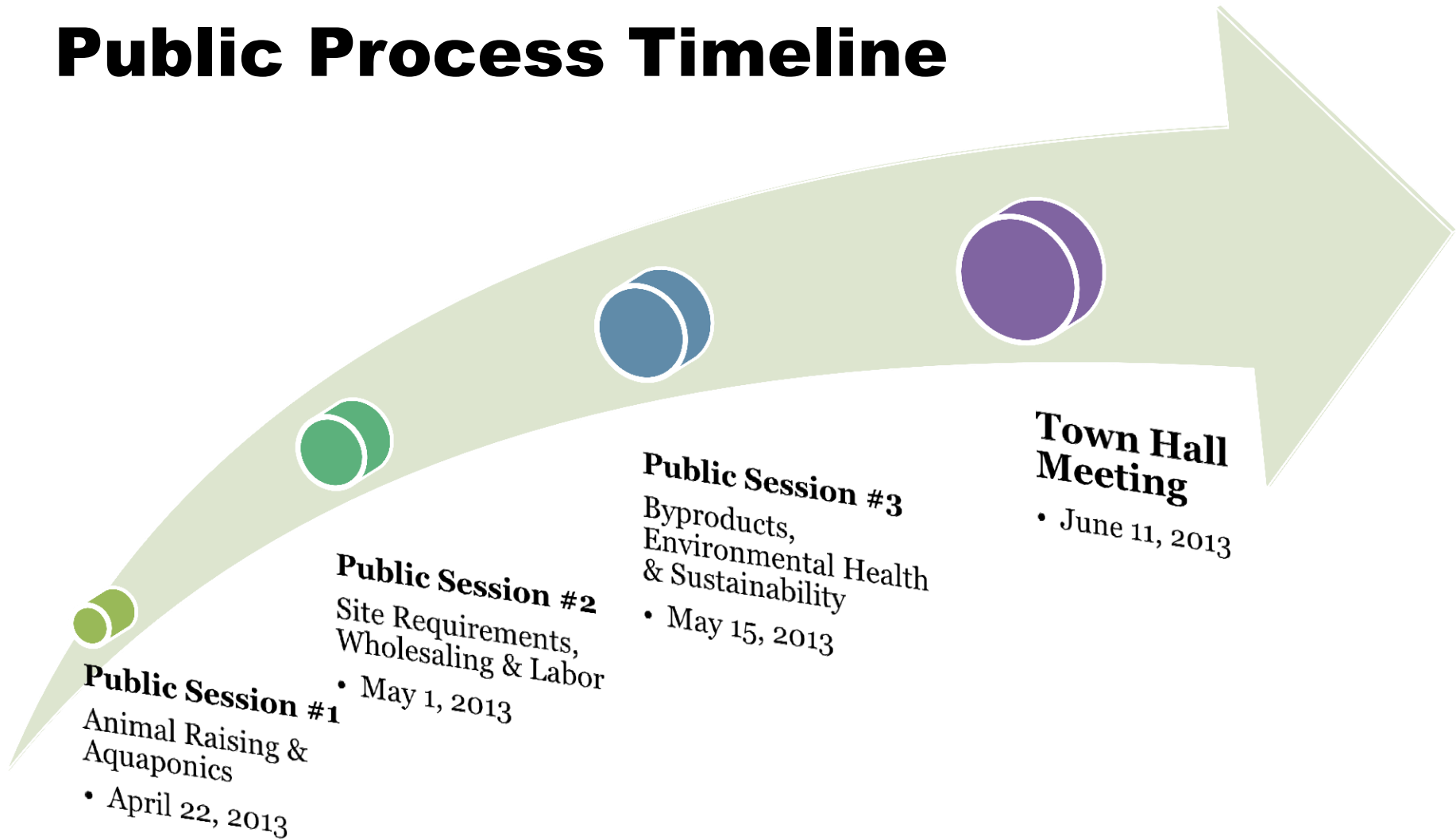
- **First task:** Urban Farm Code Update
 - February 26, 2013 - Planning Commission charged the SFPB with “initiating an ordinance to amend Chapter 25-2 of the City of Austin Land Development code to clarify, update and revise regulations related to urban farms, livestock, size of farm, employees and dwelling.”
 - Codes & Metrics WG formed to complete this task and meet the needs of communities, farmers, and regulators in the interest of a healthy, safe, sustainable, and just food system for all of Austin.
- **Methods:** Context Sensitive Solutions and Public Involvement Approach



Project Overview

- **Phase 1**
 - Task 1 – Kick off meeting
 - Task 2 - Communications Tools Development
 - Task 3 – Stakeholder meetings
 - Task 4 - Public Sessions
- **Phase 2**
 - Task 6 – Update Public Information Tools
 - Task 7 – Draft recommendations
 - Task 8 – Host Community Town Hall Meeting
- **Phase 3**
 - **Task 9 - Staff Review (July 1 - 22)**
 - Task 10 - Final Recommendations to SFPB
 - Task 11 - Submit to Planning Commission
 - Task 12 - Submit to City Council

Public Process Timeline





Other Outreach Efforts

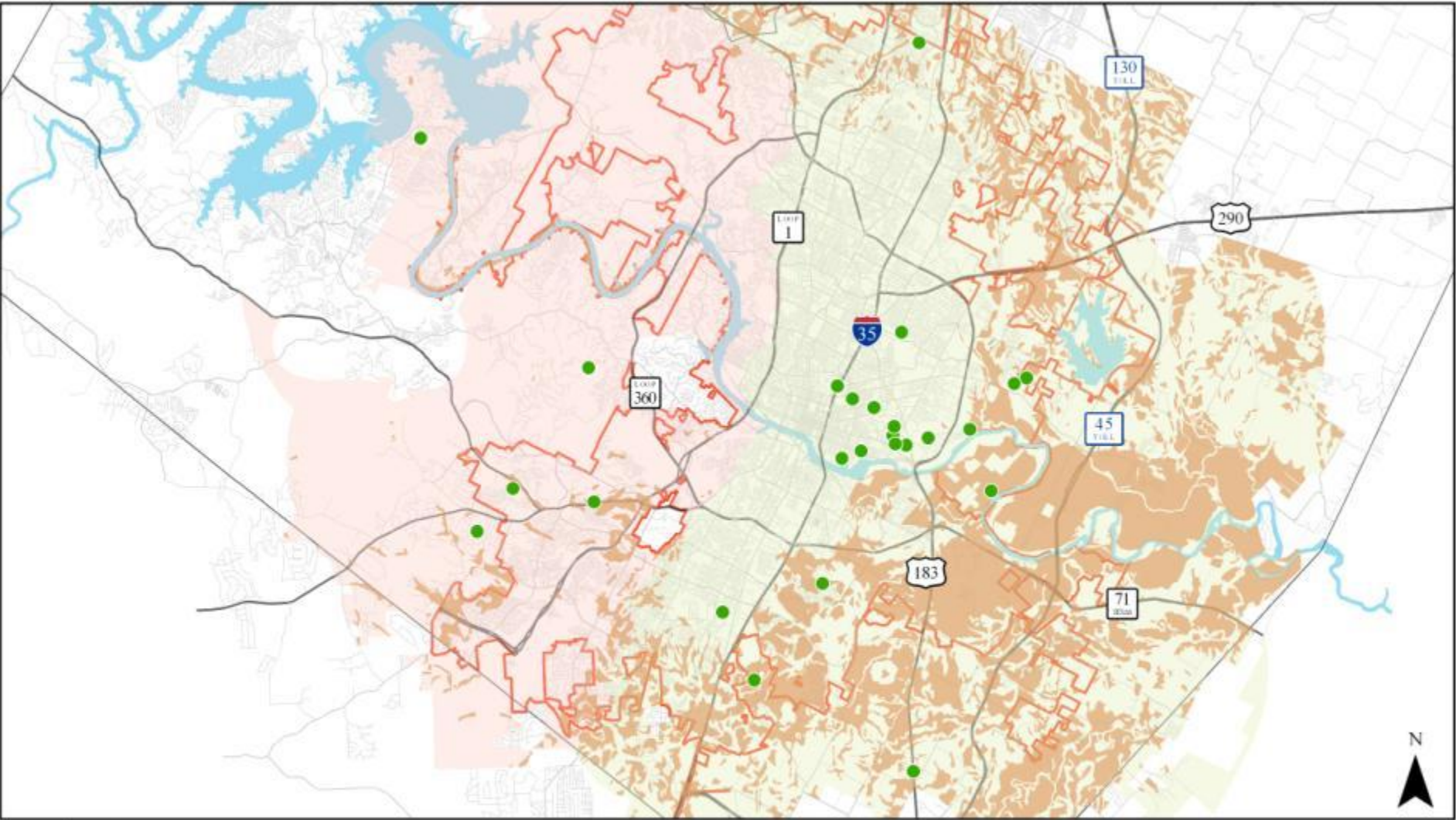
- **Govalle/Johnston Terrance Neighborhood Contact Team (5/13)**
 - Asked WG to attend a team meeting to hear their recommendations.
- **ANC-East (5/14)**
 - Asked SUACG staff to give a brief update and answer questions.
- **Human Rights Commission (6/24)**
 - Considering a resolution to Council (proposed by PODER) that urban farms not be allowed in single-family zones as a way of protecting affordable housing. The WG was asked to present draft recommendations. *Tabled resolution.*
- **Community Development Commission (7/10)**
 - Asked SUACG staff for an update on the process.



Current Code re: Urban Farms

- Urban farm is a permitted use in ALL zones (2011)
- Chapter 25-2-863 URBAN FARMS:
 - 1 to 5 acres in size.
 - Sell agricultural products grown on-site from an on-site farm stand.
 - No more than one dwelling.
 - May have employees (1 per acre).
 - Must use organic fertilizer.
 - Conditional use in the DWPZ.
- Approx. 20 small agricultural operations in City limits

Most Urban Farms in DDZ, prime soils



Urban Farm Locations



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Urban Farms | Watershed Regulation Areas |
| NRCS Prime Agricultural Soils | Desired Development Zone |
| City of Austin | Drinking Water Protection Zone |



Recommendations UPDATE

- Creation of two new uses, for three uses total
 - **Urban Farm** use (larger than one acre, permitted in all zones)
 - **Urban farm with livestock** use (conditional in all zones)
 - **Market Garden** use (less than one acre, permitted in all zones)
- Topics
 - **Definitions**
 - Dwellings
 - Employees
 - Environmental Protection
 - Animal Raising
 - **Events**
 - Sale of products



Definition

- **Current code:** Urban farms are between 1 and 5 acres
- **Points of concern**
 - Public session attendees heavily in support of removing the 1 acre minimum; increasing opportunities for small operations that generate supplemental income
 - PODER/Govalle-Johnston Terrace NCT were concerned about the prospect of commercializing single family residential neighborhoods
- **Proposed changes**
 - Urban farms: at least 1 acre in size; can have on-site farm stand; 2 employees per acre or partial acre; limited on-site animal processing; can have larger events more frequently
 - Market Gardens: less than 1 acre; on-site sales that generate no more than three customer trips per day; 1 employee who is not the owner; no on-site animal processing; limited small events



Events

- **Current code:** No clear restrictions in the Urban Farm Ordinance. Temporary Use Permits are the mechanism PDRD uses to control events on non-commercial properties (schools, churches, etc.)
- **Points of concern:**
 - Public session attendees agreed that events are an important source of community-building and farm income.
 - PODER/Govalle-Johnston Terrace NCT pointed out that excessive events and parking spillover is highly disruptive in single family neighborhoods, and expressed concern about evening events where alcohol is served.
 - Farmers are concerned that it is difficult to anticipate when events will take place and that obtaining multiple TUPs is a significant burden.



Events

- **Proposed changes:**

- Urban Farms are permitted to host educational events, with those larger than 50 people requiring a Temporary Use Permit (TUP).
 - TUPs approved on a six-month basis
 - Urban Farms with no off-site parking needs exempt from TUP.
 - In SF zones, evening events charging a fee and larger than 50 people would be limited to an average of 4 events per month.
- Market Gardens are permitted to host educational events with fewer than 25 attendees an average of once per month (no TUP).
 - Larger or more frequent events require a TUP.

Next Steps Timeline

**Sustainable
Food Policy
Board**
Aug. 26th

**Planning
Commission**
Sept. 24th

**Adopted
Code**

**Codes &
Ordinances**
Sept. 17th

**City
Council**
Oct. 3rd





Non-Code Recommendations

- **Designate a staff person to assist** current urban farmers in expeditiously obtaining a certificate of occupancy.
- Appoint SUACG staff to create Spanish/English how-to document to **assist new urban farmers in complying** with city regulations and codes.
- Designate City staff person to provide technical assistance for urban farms to become EBT-equipped (SNAP, WIC, FMNP, incentives) in order to **support affordability and accessibility** of local food. Allocate \$15K in FY2014 with a goal of getting 5-10 farm stands online.
- Investigate and utilize current City resources to **diversify Austin's community of farmers** and empower more women, people of color, and other historically oppressed groups to grow food throughout the city.
- Appoint task force to create Spanish/English **best-practices guidebook** for sustainable urban farming practices.